

to come to the floor every week to talk about an issue related to the Constitution.

Tonight, we are here to talk about the Federal Government's role in education through the No Child Left Behind Act. But I question whether the premise of Federal involvement is even legitimate.

The tenth amendment to the Constitution that enumerates States' rights throws Federal involvement in education into question.

The tenth amendment tells us that the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

No Child Left Behind has a problem. The problem is that the individual States have learned that Federal Government involvement in local education is often uninformed, inefficient and unnecessarily burdensome.

What many Americans don't know or don't remember is that No Child Left Behind is simply a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a law first passed in 1965 and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson. It has been revised and reauthorized so many times that it barely resembles the original law.

Today the law spawned by the repeated tinkering over four decades is increasingly complicated and burdensome. It attempts to tie Federal money to disparate yardsticks that may or may not make sense for the thousands of local school districts around the country.

How can one law effectively regulate both a rural school in North Carolina and an inner-city school in L.A.? I believe it cannot. Accountability needs to be a State and local issue left to parents and teachers. It should not be delegated to Washington bureaucrats who don't even step inside the thousands of schools that are scrambling to comply with cookie-cutter regulations that often don't make sense on the local level.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 was primarily concerned with the relationship between poverty and low educational achievement. That is, indeed, a noble goal. But the law has since gone far afield. Now it infringes on States' rights to oversee school systems and strays into unconstitutional areas.

Again, the 10th amendment to the Constitution says, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved for the States respectively, or to the people."

The Constitution does not give the Federal Government the express right to dabble in local education. We need to give States back their full constitutional right to set education policy and encourage innovative solutions to the unique education issues faced by every State.

Tens of billions of Federal dollars cannot fix faulty schools. Broken schools need to be held accountable on the local level. By pushing accountability to the Federal level, we've produced a counterproductive system that is not responsive to the local needs of students, parents and teachers.

As we look towards the next reauthorization of this law, we must take States' rights into account, lest we again fail the most important people in this equation, our Nation's children.

#### BRING THE TROOPS HOME FOR MEMORIAL DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the sacrifices of those who have dedicated their lives in defense of our country are an important reminder of the price of freedom. These brave heroes have served this country with distinction, and it is our absolute responsibility to honor them.

Memorial Day is an opportunity to reflect on how we must support our troops, which means honoring our responsibility to provide the best protection and support for the men and women who serve in our Nation's Armed Forces. It means honoring our promise to provide lifelong health care and benefits for our veterans when they return home, and it means doing everything we can to bring our troops home from Iraq, out of harm's way.

As we reflect on the sacrifices and the accomplishments of our veterans, it's vitally important to reaffirm our support for our troops on Memorial Day. And Memorial Day is an opportunity to commend all who have defended our country and safeguarded the values cherished by every single American. It's a chance to repeat that while we strongly disagree with this administration and its continuing occupation of Iraq, we support our troops.

This administration refuses to hear the calls of the vast majority of Americans demanding that we bring the troops home. It continues to believe that the only way forward in Iraq is to spend more money, send more troops for an open-ended debacle. This administration maintains its strategy for delay and denial, refusing to plan for an end to the Iraq occupation, a blank check and no accountability.

As the administration stubbornly refuses to accept that we cannot win an occupation, the men and women serving in Iraq are suffering the consequences of these mistakes. Nearly 20 percent of the soldiers returning from Iraq experience some symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, which puts them at significantly higher risk for suicide and drug addictions. More than 34,000 of our servicemembers have been injured in Iraq, and more than 3,400 have been killed.

Sending our soldiers back into an increasingly deadly civil war on extended tours with worn-out equipment is not supporting the troops. We cannot let this neglect for our veterans become the hallmark of the occupation. We must strengthen our commitment to our troops. We must provide them with the support they deserve.

That's why I've introduced H.R. 508, the Bring the Troops Home and Iraq Sovereignty Restoration Act, which will end the occupation within 6 months of passage and will provide for full physical and mental health care for all of our Nation's veterans. Our troops deserve no less.

Mr. Speaker, this Memorial Day is an opportunity, an opportunity to celebrate the honorable service of those who were in past wars, those who have served in between wars, and those who are serving today. And we can do that by providing our veterans with the support that they need. It's an opportunity on this Memorial Day to support the troops who are in Iraq by demanding that they come home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. GRANGER addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### OPENNESS IN THIS INSTITUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, one of the hallmarks of this institution is openness. Every minute of debate in this Chamber is captured on C-SPAN cameras. Every minute of debate and dialogue in the committee rooms are transcribed and recorded. This practice is premised on the principle that the public has a right to know what factors go into our decisions here.

I don't think the public would be very pleased to learn how much of this decisionmaking process is moving behind closed doors, particularly as it relates to earmarks.

Over the past several years it became common practice for appropriators to include earmarks in committee and conference reports, rather than the text of the bills. Frequently, a committee report containing thousands of earmarks would come to the floor only hours before the final vote on the bill. At times the committee report would be made public only after the bill had already passed.

The bottom line is that, over several years, earmarks endured very little scrutiny from this body. I think the voters have become very aware of this failing on our part. My party, the Republican Party, allowed the practice of earmarking to get out of hand. Taxpayers have paid the price. This institution has paid the price. Finally, we